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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4689
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 CAIRO 000047

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

SIPDIS

FROM CDA TUELLER FOR A/S POSNER TEL AVIV PLEASE PASS TO A/S POSNER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/06/2030

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [KIRF](#) [ELAB](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESSETTER FOR A/S POSNER'S JANUARY 12-15

VISIT TO CAIRO

REF: A. 09 CAIRO 2283

[B.](#) 09 CAIRO 2277

[C.](#) 09 CAIRO 2209

[D.](#) 09 CAIRO 2164

[E.](#) 09 CAIRO 1836

[F.](#) 09 CAIRO 928

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Classified By: CDA Matthew H. Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1.](#) KEY POINTS

-- (C) The impact of the political reform process that started at the beginning of this decade is mixed. Activists and opposition politicians -- (C) However, the government continues to suppress the political opposition, retaliate against journalists and bloggers, and restrict religic -- (C) As the 2010 parliamentary and 2011 presidential elections approach, President Mubarak continues to resist taking steps that could weaker -- (C) We continue to urge the GOE to take steps forward such as lifting the State of Emergency, allowing increased political pluralism and res

[2.](#) (C) A/S Posner, we warmly welcome you to Cairo, and are scheduling meetings with a wide range of interlocutors from the Egyptian government opportunity to reassure activists and opposition politicians who are concerned that the Obama Administration has backed away from supporting political reform.

Political Landscape

[3.](#) (C) The 2011 presidential elections and the question of succession are the focus of most domestic political discussions. President Mubarak block independent candidates. They have called for additional reforms before the elections, including improvements to the voting lists and a r electoral system, have dominated headlines and drawn fire from NDP supporters. We regularly raise with the GOE the importance of allowing free

[4.](#) (C) As the 2010 parliamentary and 2011 presidential elections approach, significant political reform has fallen off the agenda. In his Nove In private discussions, Mubarak and other senior leaders argue that without strong authorities to combat religious extremists, the stability of

[5.](#) (C) U.S. funding supports civil society efforts to train

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candidates and domestic monitors, educate voters and provide technical assistance to the GOE in administering the elections. However, the GOE Widespread arrests and internal dissent have weakened the MB and its electoral chances, but many still see it as the only alternative to the cu to Washington.

Human Rights and Political Reform Stalled

[6.](#) (C) The impact of the political reform process that started at the beginning of this decade is mixed. On the positive side, the reformlega

[7.](#) (C) Since May 2009, we have asked the government to take several steps forward, including:

-- Lift the State of Emergency, and replace it with a counterterrorism law guaranteeing civil liberties.

-- Release detained bloggers.

-- Facilitate monitoring for the 2010 and 2011 elections.

-- Register the U.S. NGOs operating in Egypt: NDI, IRI and IFES.

-- Publicly endorse the quasi-governmental National Council for Human Rights' (NCHR) May 2009 recommendations, which include lifting the State

-- Pass uniform places of worship legislation to allow Christians to worship freely, and redress discrimination.

-- Issue ID cards for Bahai's.

[8.](#) (C) The issuing of identification documents to some of Egypt's Bahai's in recent months is a positive development, but implementation has k sectarian clashes that often erupt, especially in rural areas, in response to church-building. Well-placed NCHR contacts have told us in recer

[9.](#) (C) The government's November 2009 report for the UN Human Rights Council's February 17 Universal Periodic Review of Egypt makes voluntary pledges to "finalize the text of a balanced counterterrorism la The report also pledges to "review" the NCHR's recommendation to enact a uniform places of worship law, and to enact legislation on issues such

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Freedom of Expression

[10.](#) (C) The government generally allows a wide range of criticism in the independent print press, but imposes constraints on mass media outlet

[11.](#) (SBU) Three bloggers remain in prison (ref E). XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, who has been jailed since October 2006, was sentenced to four years in pris

[12.](#) (U) Prominent democracy activist XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX (XXXXXXXXXXXX) remains in self-imposed exile in the United States following a June 2007 ci grounds be referred to the Prosecutor General (attorney-general equivalent) for investigation. The Public Prosecutor referred a separate crimi convinced President Bush to withhold aid because of lack of progress on democratic reform.

Police Brutality

[13.](#) (C) While the GOE and its supporters claim that police brutality is unusual, human rights lawyers believe it continues to be a pervasive, police brutality by hiding the abuse and pressuring victims not to bring cases. Human rights lawyers believe the GOE should reduce pressure or

Religious Freedom

[14.](#) (C) Religious minorities in Egypt generally worship without restriction, and in many cases play leading roles in the country's business ar outside of major cities, in obtaining required government approval to build and renovate churches. Copts also point to the GoE's failure to ac

[15.](#) (C) While there is no statutory prohibition on religious conversion and Egypt's constitution guarantees freedom of

belief, court rulings and bureaucratic hurdles represent a prohibition in practice on conversion from Islam to Christianity. Converts from Isl

Labor

¶16. (C) Egypt's on-going wave of strikes and labor unrest has continued. Although Egypt's labor law requires that striking workers receive t operate, despite a law requiring that all trade unions join the GoE-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation. Labor activism focuses on ecor Tueller